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**FOURCHON, LA.** - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon joined members of the LA 1 Coalition, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, and others for a groundbreaking ceremony in Fourchon for the next phase of the Louisiana Highway 1 improvement project: elevating the road from Leeville to Port Fourchon.

**"La. 1 is a critical lifeline to Louisiana's 'working coast,' which supplies much of the energy that keeps our nation moving,"** said Rep. Melancon. **"More importantly, La. 1 is the only hurricane evacuation route for the tens of thousands of coastal residents, tourists, and offshore workers. When La. 1 floods, as is happening more and more often as the road sinks because of coastal erosion, these people are left stranded with no way to flee oncoming storms. I am proud to have played a part in this project. I will continue to work in Congress to get the additional federal funding we need to complete the La. 1 project."**

Rep. Melancon has worked in Congress to secure over \$125.5 million in federal funding and loans for the La. 1 improvement project, which will eventually elevate the highway from Golden Meadow to Fourchon and protect it from flooding. In 2005, Rep. Melancon worked to secure \$60 million for the project through the highway funding authorization bill (SAFETEA LU, H.R. 3). The La. 1 project also received a \$60 million loan in 2005 from the federal TIFIA program, after Rep. Melancon urged U.S. Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta to approve the large loan because of the highway's regional and national significance as the sole evacuation route and access road to Port Fourchon and the LOOP. The project has also received over \$1.7 million through the Coastal Impact Assistance Program, which Rep. Melancon helped establish with the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Rep. Melancon has obtained \$3.8 million for La. 1 through the annual transportation appropriations process and has requested additional federal funding for the critical project in this year's appropriations bill.

More information about the La. 1 improvement project can be found at the LA 1 Coalition's website ( [www.la1coaliton.org](http://www.la1coaliton.org) ) and [www.la1project.com](http://www.la1project.com) .

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